

**Legislative Assembly,***Friday, 28th July, 1905.*

	PAGE
Address-in-Reply, tenth day, resumed on Mr. Rason's Amendment; Division taken	489
Personal Explanations: Mr. Henshaw, as to his strictures on the Premier	518
The Premier, as to Mr. Holman	518

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 3.30 o'clock p.m.

**PRAYERS.****PAPERS PRESENTED.**

By the PREMIER: Annual statement of the Suspense Accounts opened under Section 58 of the Audit Act, 1904, during year ended 30th June, 1905.

**ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.****TENTH DAY OF DEBATE.****THE AMENDMENT ON THE ADDRESS.**

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. T. F. QUINLAN (Toodyay): I did not intend to speak on the subject before the House, and should not speak now were it not for the action taken by the member for West Perth (Mr. Moran). I feel in a measure obliged to speak in consequence of his reference to the proposed purchase of the Midland concession. I see very little, if any, difference between the amendment now before the House and the amendment already dealt with. As is well known to members, I was elected to support the James Government; and I feel in duty bound to support the remnants of it on this occasion.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND RAILWAYS: The remnants have repudiated the James Government.

MR. QUINLAN: They are like the occupants of the Treasury bench; they vary their platform as may be necessary. I regret extremely the personalities indulged in during this debate, and especially the reference made to the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Rason). Perhaps no one in this House, other than the member for Sussex (Mr. Frank Wilson), has any grievance against that gentleman. I have been a supporter of his for a number of years; and I now feel even more strongly attached to him personally for the manner

in which he has conducted himself as leader of the Opposition. I regret likewise the references made to the Premier (Hon. H. Daglish), the member for West Perth, and the member for Katanning (Hon. F. H. Piesse). The member for Kimberley (Mr. F. Connor) is not here this afternoon; but wherever he is, I feel sure no one regrets his utterances more deeply than he. I know fairly well the character of that hon. member; I know that to-day he feels very sorry for his utterances of last evening. I do not intend to indulge in any personalities. What I have to say will be said as briefly as possible. My sole reason for opposing the present Government is that it is controlled by a Congress. As to the *personnel* of the Government I have nothing to say, except that I have the greatest admiration for Ministers. They are in my opinion an honourable lot of men. Considering the opportunities they have had, they have conducted very well the affairs of the country. True it is, there have been recent changes in the Ministry; and two ex-Ministers have referred in their speeches to the Premier's action on that occasion. With these gentlemen I sympathise, because I feel that the Premier might perhaps have taken a more gentlemanly course when he disposed of those Ministers. However, that is his concern and not mine. There may be between them and the Premier something which is not known to me; and therefore I do not consider it my business to make any farther inquiry. The member for Forrest (Mr. A. J. Wilson), speaking a few evenings ago, made a statement to this effect:—

The ideal of the Labour party was the attainment of certain fixed principles calculated to make for the advancement of the State as a whole. In realising this ideal it might be necessary to do some injury to a few who in the past had prospered at the expense of the many; but even those who suffered would be more than compensated by the ultimate results.

I regret that the hon. member should have gone so far, because he must be well aware that a Cabinet composed solely of Labour Ministers cannot represent the whole community. I have already admitted their honesty. They have done their best; but it is against reason to suppose for a moment that, being elected on a definite platform and pledged to a

particular party, they can express or realise the views of the general community. My ideal would be a coalition Government; and I hope it is not yet too late to form a coalition, even if it be for the two years yet to expire of the life of this Parliament. It would be in the best interests of the country, and would set at rest this turmoil and trouble and the terrible effect it has on business in general, and even, I may say, on the employment of a number of men who would be in their various places throughout the State. There is a general feeling of unrest, and the sooner it is settled the better for all. I should like to see a good coalition Government formed, no matter from what part of the House. Another reference was made by the member for Albany. He agreed with the member for Forrest that "party politics had proved a failure throughout the Commonwealth, and that they compelled members to vote against their best judgment." That is the position in regard to the party at present in power. They are not free, as I should like to see them. The only member of the Government I consider to be absolutely free is the hon. gentleman who occupies a seat in the Upper House. If there were a mixture of representation in the Ministry I feel confident of the effect; and I hope that even the present occupants of the Government benches will see for themselves the necessity of modifying their platform in that direction. While there are some measures in the policy of this Government I intend to support, there are of course some I could not agree with. I am in favour myself, and have expressed it on more than one occasion in this Chamber, of a tax on unimproved land, but not a tax on unimproved land values, for the reason that it would be the means of opening up large areas now held by numbers of owners throughout the State to the detriment of the State, which are merely occupied as sheep walks. We have numerous instances of the benefits to be derived where these large estates are repurchased by the Government and numbers of families settled on them. The same effect, I am sure, will follow if a tax is imposed on unimproved land; and it would cause those simply relying on the unearned increment and holding large areas, to work them. It would

have special regard to the Midland Railway Company. [MR. BURGESS: We cannot do it.] We can; I feel confident. I have no regard whatever for the Midland Company because of the manner in which they have treated this country. If it had not been for the manner in which the country treated the Midland Company they would have been bankrupt long ago; and considering the manner in which we have nursed the company, I think the time has come when we should deal with them in another way; and I hope that to any proposed tax on land a farther addition may be imposed on absentee owners. As to the proposed income tax, while I agree it would be necessary providing our revenue was such as to warrant this step being taken—because I suppose, to get down to bed-rock, this is no fairer means of taxation—I do not think it is at the present time justified, seeing the enormous area we have with so small a population. Likewise I venture to say that what would follow would be the formation of a new department and the creation of a number of offices; and in all probability, the amount to be raised from this source would be eaten up by the cost of collection. I should like to see greater economy in regard to the administration of some departments. I especially refer to the Government Printing Office and the Railway Department. I should also like to see a better result from the Lands Department. One thing perhaps has not occurred to the minds of all members. I know it has been raised before in this House by the member for Beverley, and when he did so I had the pleasure of supporting him; and I still feel that we should look ahead and devise some means of separating the money received by the sale of land from the ordinary revenue, such as is received from the rents of leases and other sources. We are gradually, it is true, diminishing the assets of the State by the sale of land, and we are utilising that revenue—so-called revenue—as general revenue. I consider that the money derived from the sale of land should be devoted to the sinking fund on loans; at least, what proportion of it could be spared should be directed in that use. Of course we know that the work in the Lands Department is behind-hand and that it will cause con-

siderable expense this year; but to my mind the department is not giving the return it should; and I trust, whoever the Minister may be, he will take steps to get better results than we obtain from that department. I am bound to say that I am in favour of the purchase of the Midland Railway concession on fair terms. I am not prepared to say that we would be getting value at one and a-half millions; but I would be largely guided by the great experience of one of our officers, Mr. Paterson, regarding the land; and I take it, so far as the railway itself is concerned, the Government have authoritative information as to its value. Therefore I would be prepared to support the purchase, providing the officers who are competent to judge have valued it so that we would be warranted in paying that sum of money. [MR. MORAN: Now?] Even now. I take it, it would be by debentures. [MR. MORAN: What difference would that make?] We would have to pay the interest, of course; but I feel that the indirect benefit through settlement would be immense. It is well known that a considerable amount of good has followed the repurchase of estates in the past; and I am confident of what the result would be following the repurchase of this land and its resale. The Midland Company charge more for the land than the Government do; and farther than that, their terms are very short. In addition to charging, in many cases, £1 per acre, they charge six per cent. interest, which is very little encouragement, except to large purchasers. I go so far as to say it is not the large purchasers or the large men we want, but the small men and close settlement; and the only means of obtaining such settlement would be by the sale of land on terms spread over 20 years, such as we do now. Therefore whatever may happen in regard to this matter—for I know that another place is not sitting now, which therefore for the time being disposes of the question—I do not fear but that the company will be willing, even two or three months hence, to take the same terms. I cannot take that bluff altogether that we are bound to the 31st of this month for the price of £1,500,000. I do not think there is anyone else “after it” as the saying is; therefore I have no

fear but that we shall be able to purchase the concession a few months hence, when Parliament has settled down to work and members have seen the papers and the valuations, and have come to a conclusion that it will be well to purchase. While dealing with this question I desire to draw the attention of members to a fact which may not have occurred to everyone. My attention was drawn to it by a solicitor of this city, otherwise I confess I should not have been able to make the announcement I am going to make. Section 17 of the Midland Railway Company's Act, 1893, makes provision for the purchase of the railway itself upon terms, by arbitration. Supposing for instance we deemed fit to exercise our right under this section and purchase the railway itself only, there is nothing to prevent us—assuming we passed a measure for a tax on unimproved land—dealing with the Midland Railway Company as regards the land. Therefore I think the railway itself perhaps is a more immediate concern than the whole concession. In my opinion this section gives the Government the right to purchase the line by arbitration. We know at present the railway is not in the same state of repair as the State-owned railways are; therefore we should only be purchasing on the actual value. I will read the section, and members will see for themselves what they may not have been aware of before, that there is the right to purchase the railway. The section states:—

That the Government shall have the right of purchasing the railway and the works in connection therewith, at any time on giving 12 months' notice of their intention to exercise such right. The price to be fixed by arbitration.

Surely with a section of that kind we have the right to purchase, if in the opinion of a majority of members the price asked for the whole concession is too high. I trust members will see the advisability of exercising the right in this direction, and obtaining the railway proper, and then compelling the holders of the land to either improve or submit to taxation. Amongst the many items proposed I shall gladly support the terms suggested for the purpose of constructing the Pilbarra Railway. Old age pensions, although I think more a question for the Federal Parliament, is a right and proper

proposal to adopt. I shall favour also the amendment of the Companies Act as proposed, because it seems to me very unfair that properties held in this country should be represented by boards of directors in other parts of the world; and the offices should be in this country for the convenience of shareholders. The proposal as to water and sewerage I am heartily in accord with. There has been too much delay in this matter, and the sooner a scheme is adopted for the Metropolitan area the better for the health of the people here. It will also serve as an encouragement to people looking forward to coming to some part of Australia. It will make this place more attractive, and people will come here with greater confidence as regards the health of themselves and their families. The country is practically at a standstill, and the sooner the debate is concluded and we get to work, whatever Government may be in power, and do something practical, the better for all. So far as I am concerned, I am bound to vote with the party in Opposition. I have given my only reason for opposing the present occupants of the Treasury benches: but whatever the result of the division may be afterwards so long as the Government remain in power I can only say I shall be prepared to give them most generous support. I especially admire the Premier for his outspokenness last evening. More than ever I have the highest admiration for the man who is able to come into the Chamber and speak his mind as the Premier did last evening. Therefore, if he should remain as leader of the party and the Government succeed in the division, they can rely on me practically as good a supporter as any of their own. So far as the proposed measures are concerned I cannot agree to all; indeed I may say that some of the Government's supporters at the present time are not extremists; they do not believe altogether in their programme, but are forced, I hold, rightly or wrongly to support the programme adopted by Congress. My great objection to the Labour Government is that. They are equal in every respect to manage the country's business, though to some extent they have not been blessed with the same education as the aspirants to office; still they have in my opinion something

more desirable than anything else, honesty of purpose.

MR. C. HARPER (Beverley): When last year I cast my vote in favour of the present party in power, I received many severe attacks from my friends for taking such a monstrous course. I did it with an object, as I said at that time. We were in a position which had never been arrived at by any State of the Commonwealth, or by any other State; no party pledged to one particular platform had ever got anything like the power in a deliberative assembly. Much of their policy was very much in the air, and it was not possible to say what would be the result. I do not think it a good thing for a country to discuss matters that are in the air. I like to have them brought down, so that we can see definitely what they are. For that reason I considered it my duty as a representative in Parliament to do what I could to bring things to a practical issue. The result is that the Labour party have been in power for twelve months. The main factor moving the Labour party is, as the member for Toodyay (Mr. Quinlan) says, an irresponsible body behind them. This body—Congress—has lately held another meeting, and I have been very much interested in comparing the policy enunciated three years ago with that adopted a few days ago. And it goes to show how uncertain members must feel of their own ground. I have just taken out one or two points on which they slightly differ or on which they are silent. In 1902 one of the articles of faith was the abolition of the Legislative Council. That has now been altered to effective reform of the Legislative Council. That may mean much or it may mean less. In 1902 the gospel of the Labour party was the election of State Governor; now, the office is to be abolished. Then they advocated the election of Ministers; now, they are silent on the matter. Whether it is experience has taught them that the previous idea was a false one or not, I cannot say. Then there was a progressive land tax with an exemption up to £300. The tax is to remain, but the exemption is to be abolished. That shows they were not quite certain of their ground three years ago. The next point was originally the stopping of the

sale of Crown lands; absolutely no more to be sold. They have altered that into an indefinite term of nonalienation, which may mean anything or may mean nothing.

MR. NEEDHAM: That is what it is meant for.

MR. HARPER: Nothing. I cannot see otherwise how the present Minister for Lands can be using his utmost endeavours to get rid of Crown lands, and yet adhere to a policy of no sale. One might look at most of these things as progressive in the direction of their having found they started out with rather too large ideas, which were a little bit impracticable; but so far I think that is commendable. There are, however, one or two things that have come up fresh, and they are rather important. One is the proposal that the Judges should be elected. [MR. SCADDAN: Justices of the Peace.] No; Judges; the election of a Judge. [MEMBER: That is wrong.] It is not a proposition of an extreme member; but this is a proposition tabled by the Trades and Labour Council, probably after very considerable discussion, and we may assume it represents the majority of the Trades and Labour Council. Of course they did not put it in the form of election of Judges, but they put it in the form of election of a Judge. I have had a good deal to do with drafting stock at different times, picking out the best from the worst. I found the result was just the same whether one rejected the worst or picked the best; so that the principle underlying is this: "We will only have the Judge we want," and that means selection of Judges.

MR. NEEDHAM: No. Judges were never mentioned.

MR. HARPER: Judges were not, but one Judge was, and he must sooner or later cease, and then another one would be selected.

MR. NEEDHAM: One Judge was never mentioned.

MR. HARPER: I am absolutely correct in saying the principle underlying this is the selection of a Judge. Once adopt the principle, and it covers the whole of the judicial bench.

MR. BOLTON: It is only fair I should explain to the hon. member that Congress did not decide any such thing.

MR. HARPER: I never said Congress did. I said that the Trades and Labour Council put that on their notice paper, and it was only omitted after due consideration. On looking at the speaking and voting I find that 12 spoke in favour of it and only three against it at Congress, and that they got rid of it by its being ruled out of order.

MR. TROY: That is most effective.

MR. HARPER: It is effective, but it does not remove the brand of policy. One of the most startling things required by this body—and people generally do not seem to realise it—is that the Ministry should submit its policy and its measures to that body before enunciating them to the public.

MR. SCADDAN: That was not agreed to.

MR. HARPER: But it was proposed. Surely these propositions would never have been allowed to see the light of day if there had not been some strong feeling in favour of them.

MR. BOLTON: Anyone can place anything on that paper.

MR. HARPER: I have no doubt they could. But the very fact of this body sitting behind and dictating the policy of the Government—[MR. NEEDHAM: That is wrong]—would, if it only met with a little success, go on and extend.

MR. NEEDHAM: They do not do that.

MR. HARPER: They do not because they cannot; but they would like to. The most amazing thing to my mind with regard to all these motions is that the underlying principle of the whole Congress and the whole movement of the Labour party, although they probably will not acknowledge it, is coercion.

MR. NEEDHAM: No.

MR. HARPER: The workers must be coerced into the unions.

MR. NEEDHAM: No.

MR. HARPER: The employers must be coerced into employing unionists.

MR. NEEDHAM: No.

MR. HARPER: The Ministry must be coerced by caucus. Judges are to be coerced into giving decisions in favour of the caucus.

MR. BOLTON: The Opposition is to be coerced by the Government too.

MR. HARPER: And the laws are to be made at the instance of caucus, which the Judges are to enforce. That is the

underlying principle. I am not saying they advocate it directly, but it is extraordinary to me that a body of men who profess that they represent the Labour party, and who have been voting for generations against coercion should have this as a bedrock upon which they are working. Another thing very remarkable—and I have no doubt that many of my hon. friends on the Treasury bench will recognise it—is that an underlying principle of the whole of the Labour party's platform is mistrust; mistrust of one another. No man is allowed to take his place unless he signs the pledge; that is "We cannot trust you." [MEMBERS: Not always.] That is the Congress pledge as far as I can learn. A man is supposed to sign before he can become a candidate. Having signed that, he himself affixes a stigma to his own character by saying, "I cannot be trusted; I must sign this before I can be trusted." What is the value of it? If a man is good, he does not need to sign it. If he is bad, it will not prevent him. I do not wish this to apply personally, but we had an instance the other day. The member for Forrest (Mr. A. J. Wilson) abandoned his pledge. [MEMBER: Left the party.] I do not know whether he left the party or not, but virtually he abandoned the pledge. He had signed a pledge and he broke it. Then what is the value of it? That is what I want to point out. The signing of this pledge has a stigma attached to it, and the principle of coercion underlying it seem to me absolutely contradictory to the claims made by the Labour party, that they are for everything which is good, and are opposed to all that is evil. I grant, and I am glad to be able to say it, that the Ministry during the last year have done very much that is good for the State. They have done a very great deal of good, and it shows that men can be straight and honourable and endeavour to do the best for the State although they belong to the Labour party after having signed that pledge. But what I foresee as certain, and what is really at the bottom of a lot of the trouble to-day, is that men who have signed that pledge find it is unworkable. They find that they cannot work and do their duty as representatives of the State while they are bound by caucus to that pledge. Sooner

or later that must break down. One of the planks of the Labour party, as shown in the Governor's Speech, is to either abolish or reform the Legislative Council. Of course, if the members of that party or the caucus desire to get absolute control of the legislation and of the finances of the State, they must secure the passage of that somehow or other. Several members have said that they hoped to see the day—I think amongst others the member for East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin)—when there would be a majority in that House of Labour members.

HON. W. C. ANGWIN: I did not say so, but I hope to see the day.

MR. HARPER: I just want to point out to members who have that desire and think that the Labour platform is all good, what a danger there is lurking behind it. No man can vote against the Ministry if that is likely to turn the Ministry out. That is his pledge. It does not matter what he thinks; he must keep the Ministry in. We will suppose a Ministry gets in with a majority behind it, that Ministry must remain there for three years whatever happens.

HON. W. C. ANGWIN: You have never seen the pledge.

MR. HARPER: I have taken it from the printed form. They must never vote if it is to endanger the Government. I am right in saying that. [LABOUR MEMBERS: No.] Here is the pledge, and I do not see that it has been amended in the last twelve months:—

I hereby pledge myself not to oppose any duly selected Labour candidate; and I farther pledge myself, if returned to Parliament, to do my utmost to ensure the carrying out of the principles embodied in the Labour platform, and on all such questions, and on questions affecting the fate of a Government, to vote as a majority of a duly constituted caucus may decide.

I will easily show how the Government can always secure it, supposing there be a majority of Labour members in the House. This is of course presuming that the Labour party have reduced the qualification for Upper House electors, so as to have a Labour majority there also, or that the Upper House has been abolished, which amounts to the same thing. Then such conditions will enable the Labour party to pass anything.

Suppose the Labour party decided to pay all Labour members £500 a year each?

MR. MORAN: They would never go out of power.

MR. HARPER: That is what I contend. They would never go out of power so long as that Parliament lasted.

MEMBER: The Opposition would not try to put them out?

MR. HARPER: But the Government need not pay the Opposition members. In fact, the position is just this. Last year Labour members were very much incensed against me for suggesting that there was a danger in this country of a state of affairs like that which existed in New York under the rule of Tammany Hall. Here is the very machinery to produce it; all that is needed, absolute control, a Government which cannot be turned out, which can do as it likes with the funds and with the laws.

MR. HENSHAW: The principle is different. Do not forget that.

MR. HARPER: There seem to be differences on the other (Labour) side as to principles. Members always forget that opportunity makes the thief, no matter where or who he may be.

MR. NEEDHAM: Are we thieves?

MR. HARPER: I do not say so. I say, opportunity makes the thief. That is an established axiom all the world over. If we put any man in absolute power; I care not whether he comes from the highest position in the land or from the lowest, we expose him to a temptation which he is often unable to withstand. Take the number of cases in which men of high and honourable character have ultimately succumbed to temptation. No man knows the extent of his power to resist evil. Here it is proposed to give power to 30 or 40 men to do absolutely as they like. [MR. MORAN: Australia is suffering from the robberies of the conservatives in the old days.] No doubt. That is the very point. The great struggle of the so-called democrats of modern times has been against abuses of power. [MR. NEEDHAM interjected.] The hon. member is evidently quite incapable of understanding the position. I say, if we give men power they will abuse it, if there is no check. We cannot get away from that point. The world is full of examples of it. There has been great discussion on

the subject of preference to unionists. I notice some members say that preference to unionists does not mean much; that it will only equalise things as between employer and employee. But I notice other members, with a little less discretion, who say that what they want to secure is absolute power of the unions over the men, because it is found that unionists who have been working and bearing the burden and heat of the day in fighting for union principles have had to fight other men in their own trades who are getting the benefit of the unionists' work, and unionists consider that those who fight the battle ought to have the control. [MEMBER: Do not forget the unscrupulous employer.] It is just the same with the employer. I say the principle is wrong because it is coercion; and coercion is foreign to our nature, and a thing we should all fight against. It seems to me so simple and easy to obtain by another process what we desire, that the employment of coercion ought not to be for a moment considered. If unionists want preference, let them deserve it. If the principle were adopted which was adopted by the guilds of old, the first Labour unions, no employer would have any workers but unionists. But the present principle is to attract to the unions the man who is least efficient, and to keep out the man who likes to preserve his independence. The object is to force men to join the union. I say, if the principle adopted by the guilds of old were adopted by modern unions, their members would secure all the work they wanted, and the unions all the men they wanted. It would then be the waster who would have to go out. Now-a-days it is the waster who very often goes in. The following were the principles of the guilds of old:—

The guild had to see that its members possessed due qualifications, moral and technical, and that the work they turned out was of fair and reasonable quality. In other words, the interests of producers and consumers were supposed to be reconciled on equitable grounds.

That is just the principle we need. If members of a union will say to the men they know to be duffers, to men who try to keep other men from working—"You must conform to certain rules and conditions, or you will not be eligible for

membership," all will be well. But the method now employed is force; and therefore I say the Labour party is on an entirely wrong and self-contradictory basis. Labourists demand that the standard of living be raised; but they try to force men to join them, instead of leading them into the unions. [MR. HOLMAN: They say that force is good fattening stuff.] Perhaps the hon. member has not always thought so. I was about to say something about the proposed land tax; but as the subject may come up later, I shall not deal with it now. But I wish to say a word or two about party government. I dare say members realise that I do not belong to any party. I have watched party government, and I say it is a most abominable thing; and if Labour members would only do as I say they should do in their unions, they might force a very different principle on the electors. It is because the electors do not demand a standard in their representatives that we have all the trouble of party. Take the history of an ordinary contested election. The first object is to try to find out everything that is evil in your opponent. That is frequently done. Some scribe is hired to write it up; and whether what he writes is true does not matter. That is a method frequently adopted in the United States, and in many other countries. The defamation of character is considered justifiable because it is political; and a candidate with the very best intentions and the highest principles may be knocked out in favour of the greatest scoundrel walking, who will promise anything you like, and deny anything alleged against himself. [MR. TAYLOR: Has that system grown up with the Labour party?] Of course it has not. I am speaking of party principles. I say that the Labour party have power, perhaps more power than is possessed by any other class of people in this or any other State, to remove that abuse, because they have their organisations; and if they make their own men conform to a high standard, they will force that standard on the electors. Last night the Premier spoke forcibly of the troubles he has had to endure; and I am quite confident that he spoke as he felt. Of that there can be no doubt. I realised, when the party went into power, that they

would find attached to their standing as members of Parliament, conditions which sooner or later must bring them down; and I think the experience of the Premier and his colleagues during the last few months has justified my forecast. Surely no more bitter things have been said of each other by two rival parties in this House than have been said of one another by members of the Labour party. And yet those members are bound to vote unanimously on the question of putting out the Government.

MR. MORAN: Bound largely by their own principles.

MR. HARPER: It is not a question of principle, but of a pledge.

MR. NEEDHAM: What about their own consciences?

MR. HARPER: I do not know who "they" are. I have heard much talk of conscience in Parliament; and I should be glad indeed if members would drop the word "conscience" and say "opportunity" instead. That would be much more correct. Conscience is an unknown quantity. Two men of opposite principles will die, so they say, for conscience sake. No man is quite capable of stating what is his conscience; but he always feels the opportunity, and is oftener moved by the opportunity than by his conscience. The other day the member for Perth (Mr. H. Brown), in his attack on the Government, gave as one of the reasons why they should be turned out that the Royal Commission on Immigration sent in a bill to the Treasury which the Treasury refused to pay. I do not know what that had to do with the Government.

MR. H. BROWN: I did not say it was a reason for turning them out. It was a fact. I referred to Commissions as sops.

MR. HARPER: What had the matter to do with the Government?

MR. H. BROWN: I said that Royal Commissions were sops to Government supporters.

MR. HARPER: Well, say something a little worse if you can. I should not have taken notice of this but that I am able to point a moral. I may inform the hon. member, and others interested, that the incident happened in this way. I (as chairman of the Commission) wished to have the expenditure kept as low as possible; and I gave in-



structions that a minimum quantity of provisions should be supplied; and where the Commission, when travelling, were unable to use what they carried with them, provisions had to be obtained in other quarters. I told the secretary to keep accounts, and to send them in. I heard no more about it until I received a letter from the Treasury; and I said to the secretary, "What is this?" He said, "I made out the account in the way usually adopted by Ministers when they travel." I may say that the secretary is in the Government service, and was pressed into acting as secretary to the Commission. It appears, though I was quite unaware of it, that the following system is adopted by Ministers when travelling. A guinea a day is allowed for travelling expenses, and bills are afterwards sent in to the Treasury.

**THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE AND LABOUR:** Where is the system to-day?

**MR. HARPER:** Here, I understand. I said at once, "Well, this is wrong anyway. If we are allowed a guinea a day for travelling expenses, we have no right to send in bills to the Treasury." I had a reply sent to the Treasury to the effect that the chairman of the Commission quite agreed with the letter received. Of course I know no more than that. The custom is for the Minister when he is travelling to get a guinea a day and his out-of-pocket expenses. That is what I was informed. I only hope that the Treasury will adopt the same course with the Ministers as they did with me, and that the Auditor General will do the same, and that if it be done, he will call upon the Ministers to refund. All I have to say is this. Taking the proposals, the demands made by Labour Congress, the unhappy and unfortunate position in which Ministers find themselves in consequence, and the almost beseeching tone of the Premier last night in asking to be relieved of the position he is in, I intend to support the amendment; because I feel certain that, even if it is not to-day, it cannot be long before the Ministry and the policy before them must go down. I do not feel too confident, I may say, about the result of putting the Opposition in. I feel that I am entitled to say that because, as I said before, I stand alone. I hope for the best; but I say that what must come about is that the

Ministry cannot hold out much longer. Dissensions in their own ranks must cause it; and they would go down with more honour now than if they lost the position through the intense worry upon them, which surely must operate against their conduct of the business of the country, the first thing we should look to.

**MR. W. J. BUTCHER (Gascoyne):** It was my intention to deal with the charges made inside this House and outside against this Independent bench by hon. members; but the member for Dundas has dealt so completely with that subject and placed all matters in that connection so clearly before the House and the country, that I feel it is unnecessary for me to take on that work; nor could I add anything to what he has already said. I sincerely hope, however, that it has been made abundantly clear that the members on this side of the House against whom all these vile charges were levelled, acted honourably to one another, and did nothing but was absolutely square and honourable between man and man and between party and party. I was pleased to hear the Premier confirm everything that was said, and speak so generously and fairly as he did with reference to the members occupying the Independent bench. During the course of the remarks I have to make, I hope, though I shall criticise the members on this side of the House pretty severely, they will not consider or take any remarks I make in a personal way. All the remarks I have to make will be purely of a political nature, and I sincerely hope they will not be taken by anyone in a personal way. First of all, I shall deal with the Lands Department. Regarding the hon. gentleman who occupies the position of Minister for Lands, there is, in my opinion, no man in the House more capable, and no man of whom I have a higher opinion; in fact, for this gentleman I have the highest respect; but after all, the administration of the Lands Department requires more than ability. The success of those gentlemen who filled the position in past years was not due altogether to ability, but to a lifelong experience and knowledge gained thereby. Take, for instance, one of our first and best occupants of that office, Mr. Richardson. Was he not years and years on the land?

Did he not start from the bottom of the ladder so to speak, and climb and work his way up to that position? Was he not in possession of every detail essential to the carrying out of that office? [MR. HOPKINS: Is that why he was dispensed with?] I was not here when he was dispensed with. The same argument will apply to the late representative for Northam (Hon. G. Throssell). Where do we find a greater success than was that gentleman in the Lands Department? What was the reason for that success? Was it Mr. Throssell's wonderful education? I do not say for one instant that he lacked education, but it was not that. It was due to that gentleman's downright, practical knowledge, gained after years and years of experience in land settlement. We can never hope to have that good and straightforward legislation and administration from that department unless we have a man occupying the position who has had that experience. He must have every detail in connection with land settlement at his finger tips. He cannot gain all that experience by reading some books, or works, or journals in that connection. He must have practical knowledge; otherwise, in my opinion, he will never be a success in the department. Can we hope for such administration at the hands of my friend who now occupies the position? I have every hope that he will do well; but I shall not be disappointed if he does not make the marked success that some members of this House hope he will. I have always looked upon the land of the country as its principal asset. Gold, we all know, will peter out in time, as it has done in other parts of the world; and we must look for the same results here, though we all sincerely hope it will be many years before we reach that stage. We have to look eventually to our lands. If we sacrifice our land settlement now, we are sacrificing our very life's blood; and I strongly advocate the construction of loop or spur railways extending both east and west from the South-Western and Great Southern systems. If a course of that sort were adopted and a Bill introduced which would enable the Government to build these railways at a lower standard than the present main lines and to run the trains at lower speed, as was indicated by the member for

West Perth, good work would be done. The land could then be surveyed before settlement, a principle which has been advocated before in this House, and with which I heartily agree. Also a large number of unemployed might find useful and valuable employment in clearing the land and preparing it for settlement for immigrants and other people when they feel disposed to take it up. The cost of all this work might well be added to the first cost which these people would be only too willing to pay. By this means thousands of acres of land at present closed to settlement would be made valuable, and the whole of the country would prosper and benefit. Referring to the Midland Railway Company's concession, it is scarcely necessary for me to say anything. I think the matter has been dealt with most effectually by the member for West Perth and also by members in another place; but there is no member in this House, and I doubt if there is anybody in the country, more desirous of seeing that concession and that railway in the hands of the people of this State than myself. I have always advocated the purchase of that railway, and I do so now strongly; but I qualify that statement by saying "on equitable terms"; and if the information I have be correct and if this valuation by our State valuers be not up to the valuation put on that concession by some £230,000 or £250,000, unquestionably the price they are asking is too high. It is unquestionable that we are not in a position to purchase, as has been amply described by my friend; but we must not forget that, though we do not purchase the land, we should not put any obstacles in the way of the company settling it as we claim they should do. What opportunities have the company now of disposing of their land for land settlement purposes when the unfortunate people who do attempt to purchase from them are receiving such treatment at the hands of the present Government or future Governments as they have been receiving? It is only just that I should say I do not think the action I am complaining of now is due to the present Government. It was a system inaugurated by the members of the Opposition or their predecessors. The system I complain of is in force at present. There are several men I know

who have purchased land on the Midland Railway concession, and have spent thousands of pounds in improving that land, clearing, cultivating, and fencing it, conserving water and building homes, and to-day these men are denied their titles; they have no possible hope of getting them. I have a document which was given to me a few hours ago, telling these men the Government will not agree to the sale of their land. How are we to expect a company like that to run a railway and carry on their concession if they are not allowed a free hand in settling their land?

MR. HOPKINS: Are they settling the land? That is the trouble.

MR. BUTCHER: Give them an opportunity. When land is sold to people who pay their money and these people cannot get their titles, how can we expect people to come along and take up the land?

MR. DIAMOND: Let the company first pay up the £500,000 that the State guaranteed.

MR. BUTCHER: I am not aware that they have been called on to pay it up; probably they will do so when called upon. Any firm that has a mortgage over a property will always allow the sale of a portion of the property provided the money is handed to them and the security is not injured; therefore why should not the Government carry out that same principle? The Government ask the company to carry out the terms of their contract, but the Government also should carry out their portion of the contract or not hamper the company.

MR. WATTS: Only within recent times the conditions of improving the land were put on the settlers there.

MR. HOPKINS: It is not with the settlers where the trouble lies, but with the absentees.

MR. BUTCHER: I speak on good authority, and I say it is settlers on the land who are in trouble. I know of 40 or 50 men at the present time who are willing to pay the balance down and get their titles, but the Government will not allow it.

MR. HOPKINS: Tell us the acreage.

MR. BUTCHER: They hold 10,000 to 20,000 acres.

MR. HOPKINS: Yes, 20,000 acres.

MR. BUTCHER: Why should they not have 20,000 acres as long as they are willing to spend their money on the land,

and as long as they are willing to improve the land. These are the men we want in the country, men who are willing to come here and spend their money on the land. Why keep these men out? It is a mistaken policy which the hon. member holds. I am complaining of the policy carried on by the late Government and continued by the present Government, and I think there should be an alteration of that policy. The company are willing to carry out their conditions if they are not hampered, but obstacles should be removed. If the lands in the concession are not to be purchased by the Government, the obstacles should be removed and the company allowed an opportunity of settling their lands.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND RAILWAYS: Let them pay the £500,000; let them remove the mortgage.

MR. BUTCHER: As far as I know there never has been any demand made by the Western Australian Government to be relieved of the liability they have at present. There is a clause in the agreement, I believe, stating that until the company are so many thousands of pounds in arrear of interest the agreement cannot be recalled; therefore until the Midland Company are in default there is no hope of the Government making the alteration.

MR. HOPKINS: They have made a good thing out of the State.

MR. BUTCHER: We have had all we wanted out of them. Be fair. I can remember the time when the Midland Company first started in Western Australia. I was here at the time that the contract was hawked all round the world and every inducement offered to people to take it on. What have we had from the company? Have we not had the benefit of the system? We have had the opportunities of opening up the land between here and Geraldton, and the company are prepared to continue and still carry on.

MR. DIAMOND: But the company did not subscribe enough capital to construct fifty miles of the railway.

MR. BUTCHER: Whatever charge is made against the company, another charge can be made against the Government to counterbalance it. I want to be fair and just to both parties. I want to see the company carry out their obligations, but

give them a fair opportunity of doing so. I do not want to see the Government, or any Government, unduly hamper them in their operations. I want to see them get the full benefit of the trade which is legitimately due to the railway and to the company. I would not sanction the putting on of a steamer to run in opposition to the railway. I would not subsidise a steamer or give preferential rates to take the trade from the company when they are legitimately entitled to it. If the country is not to purchase the line, give the company a fair opportunity of carrying out their agreement. The question of the Pilbarra Railway has caused a great deal of talk, and many comments both inside and outside the House. I should like to think, and I have been trying to persuade myself that it is so, that the Government are truly sincere in this matter. I know this country from one end to the other, I have travelled over every inch of it and I have seen as much of it as most men. I say conscientiously there is no part of Western Australia at this moment more entitled to railway communication and railway facilities than the Pilbarra district. I know there are huge deposits of ore in all parts of that country, and the whole district is languishing at present for the sake of railway facilities. Many of my friends advocate the line being started at Port Hedland and carried to Nullagine, taking a direct route as the crow flies. The first fifty miles would go over a howling desert where there is no possible chance of getting any trade or any opportunity of making the concern a payable proposition. Whether these matters have been brought sufficiently before the notice of the Government I do not know. They lose sight of the fact, if they ever saw it, that the portion of the country that is going to feed the line and continue to feed it is between Roebourne and Nullagine, and not between Port Hedland and Nullagine. I suppose the member for Menzies has information that I know nothing about, and thinks it a ridiculous move.

MR. GREGORY: I do not understand the insinuation.

MR. BUTCHER: Then you should not look at me in that "tone of voice." If the knowledge of practical men is of any value to the House, I say unhesi-

tatingly that the line should go from Port Sampson. The Government have lately built a large jetty there, and the Government and contractor deserve the highest credit for the work. Port Sampson is not a tidal port, and there is deep water right up to the jetty, and a little money spent on it would make it one of the best ports in the North-West. That is where the railway should start from. The line would go right through good country.

MR. DIAMOND: What is the difference in the distance?

MR. BUTCHER: It will make a difference of 60 miles. I am sorry to think this line has more opposition in the House than support. However, I shall always be a strong supporter of the line and do all I can to see it constructed. My friends may call me the member for the Pilbarra line if they like; I hope they do. I shall always advocate that railway. There is fast growing up around us a system which, I am sorry to say, is a bad one. There is fast growing up the principle of casting the responsibilities that should rest on the shoulders of Ministers on Royal Commissions. This is a system I have been watching ever since I have been in Parliament, and I consider the dimensions to which the system has grown at present are becoming nothing but a scandal and a by-word. Here we find thousands of pounds being spent on Royal Commissions, and I cannot say and I do not believe at present that we have one pennyworth of practical result from any one.

MR. DIAMOND: Then you ought to read a little more.

MR. BUTCHER: I started to read the report of the Commission on Ocean Freights, but I must confess I did not get through it.

MR. DIAMOND: It was beyond you altogether.

MR. BUTCHER: It might possibly have been; but I shall continue to study the matter a little bit and try to get it below me.

MR. DIAMOND: Yes; try and live up to it, if you can.

MR. BUTCHER: The hon. member for the ocean freights may possibly have a little more of it than he wants. Ministers in many instances are afraid to take upon themselves responsibilities

in dealing with questions, and they pass them on to Royal Commissions. It is the principle I object to. I do not look altogether at the question from a legal point of view as from a moral point of view, and I say that no member of Parliament should take a seat on a Royal Commission. If it is found necessary to appoint a commission for the purpose of making some inquiries and gaining information which we have not, it should be done by persons appointed from outside the House. We see members advocate a commission; they fight for it, and then they take seats on that commission themselves and go through the work. I have before me the cost of four commissions which have been appointed during the last four years, it may have been during the last 12 months, and the cost is £6,912 18s. 11d., and that is not the full total. The Ventilation and Sanitation of Mines Commission cost £3,256.

MR. GREGORY: How many members of Parliament were on that commission?

MR. BUTCHER: I do not think one.

MR. GREGORY: Not one member of Parliament was on that commission.

MR. BUTCHER: The objection I have to commissions is that we are creating enormous expense to gain information that Ministers should be able to get from their officers.

MR. GREGORY: I beg your pardon. You were arguing about the immorality of members of Parliament sitting on them. There was not one member of Parliament on that commission.

MR. BUTCHER: If the member for Menzies will only allow me to get through the few remarks I have to make on this subject, he will see the meaning of my remarks as to immorality in regard to the question. I have only mentioned one commission. On that there was only one gentleman who had been a member of Parliament. But we get on to another commission, and we find that on that commission there were several members of Parliament. There was the Collie Coal Commission, which cost £1,247, and what benefit have we got from that commission? Has any hon. member read the report? [MEMBER: Yes.] And have the Government made any attempt to carry out those recommendations? Will they ever make any attempt to carry

them out, or will they carry them out? Never. Such is the result of every commission I know of that has ever been appointed.

MR. MORAN: Collie coal, like the poor, we shall always have with us.

MR. BUTCHER: Now we come to the ocean freights. Perhaps there was no member of Parliament on that?

MR. DIAMOND: Three.

MR. BUTCHER: There were three members of Parliament on that Royal Commission. Out of how many?

MR. DIAMOND: Out of three.

MR. BUTCHER: In this instance I am not far wrong. There were three members on that commission, and they were all members of Parliament.

MR. GREGORY: That was appointed by the Government you support.

MR. BUTCHER: I am not attacking the Government. I am talking of broad principles. The Government that occupied the position before the present Government did precisely the same thing. So did the previous Government, and the Government before that; and I suppose future Governments will do the same thing. Still, I shall attack the principle. I say it is wrong.

MR. DIAMOND: Ask if any good has come out of the Ocean Freights Commission.

MR. BUTCHER: I dare say a very considerable amount of information has been gained by that Royal Commission.

MR. DIAMOND: We have got a reduction of freights.

MR. BUTCHER: I should be very pleased if the member for South Fremantle would get up and make his speech on this ocean freight business. Then I shall thoroughly understand it. At present I do not. I do not want to understand it. All I want to understand is that the country paid £691 to members of Parliament to make inquiries regarding ocean freights.

MR. DIAMOND: Nothing of the kind. It is absolutely untrue.

MR. BUTCHER: I say it is wrong and improper, and the sooner it is put a stop to the better.

MR. DIAMOND (in explanation): This sum of money was not paid to members of Parliament. It included the cost of printing, reporting, incidental expenses, secretary's salary, and every-

thing of that sort, and was not paid to members of Parliament. Only a small percentage of the amount was paid to members of Parliament.

MR. BUTCHER: It was not paid to members of Parliament direct, but if it did not go into their pockets they incurred the expense. I have it here before me—a list of them. The hon. member on the ocean freights drew £107 2s., and £4 16s. out-of-pocket expenses, making altogether £111 18s.

MR. DIAMOND: I drew £107 2s.

MR. BUTCHER: The amount was £107 2s., and there was £4 16s. for out-of-pocket expenses, so £111 18s. went to the credit of the hon. member. Does he deny it?

MR. DIAMOND: I do not understand you.

MR. BUTCHER: The fees of Mr. Horan, who I believe is a member of this House, came to £69 4s. [MEMBER: Incorrect.] There is the member for barge pole, or whatever it is. That member drew £71. The balance goes in expenses, which I need not detail. The total expenses of that Royal Commission were £691 18s. 7d., and I say that the country does not get the benefit from their inquiries that it should get for that value. The Government ought to be able to get the details and particulars without going to that expense.

MR. THOMAS: Will you tell us whether all the information was available after the report of the select committee?

MR. BUTCHER: I could not say.

MR. THOMAS: We are informed that it was.

MR. BUTCHER: There are many ways in this country in which that money might have been spent to better advantage. Seven thousand pounds have been paid in hard cash, and we get absolutely nothing for it. In a country like this, where we are crying out for farther development of our resources, every sixpence should be put into those works, and works that are reproductive, which are interest-paying; something to employ people in other parts of the country who are starving, or nearly so for want of work. If the money were spent in that way, it would be far better and would be to the benefit of the people. [MEMBER: The commission sat during

the recess, and members were unemployed.] I am coming to the member for barge pole, or some of these places. I read in one of the morning papers, or one of our recent publications, some remarks which were made by the member for Collie (Mr. Henshaw) and the member for Fremantle (Mr. Needham). The hon. member spoke at length, and dealt rather severely with the occupants of this bench (Independents).

MR. MORAN: With everybody.

MR. BUTCHER: More particularly with the occupants of this bench. He said it had been going round from one side of the House to the other.

MR. MORAN: He said he would not touch either party with a barge pole.

MR. BUTCHER: The member for Collie said:—

The sentiments expressed that evening and which he held nearest to his heart were uttered by Mr. Needham. The position was absolutely intolerable. Up till within the last week or so they had a Government with a majority sufficient to carry on. At the present time they were at the mercy of the four Independents.

Up to a week or two ago they had a majority sufficient to carry on. Where is the majority now? The hon. member said that at the present time they were at the mercy of the four Independents. At whose mercy have they been for the last 12 months? Have they not been at the mercy of the Independents? At whose mercy were they last session, if not that of the Independents? The hon. member said the Independent gentlemen who were responsible for the present condition of affairs had been selling or endeavouring to sell themselves to both sides at the same time, and neither side would touch them. I just want to say, in real earnest, that I cannot really understand a man forgetting his sex to that extent; I really cannot understand a man getting up in public and using such words as those. It is beyond my comprehension. The hon. member knew perfectly well when he made this statement that there was not the slightest ground for making it. There was absolutely not the slightest shred of truth in it, and he knew it. That is the worst feature of the whole thing, that the hon. member knew that there was not a shred of truth in it before he said it.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member must not accuse the member for Fre-mantle of untruth.

MR. BUTCHER: I was speaking of the member for Collie.

MR. SPEAKER: The same thing applies. The hon. member cannot accuse any other member of untruth. I ask the hon. member to withdraw that remark.

MR. BUTCHER: I withdraw it, if I am out of order. Is an hon. member of this House to stand by and hear those statements made, and be told that it is considered out of order if he gets up and says it is not the case? What course is a man to take, if he is not allowed to say those statements are not true? If I say they are incorrect, I say they are untrue. All I can say is that such statements were vile and malicious. Will I be out of order if I say that?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member would be quite out of order in saying that.

MR. BUTCHER: When I look around me and see those hon. members and reflect for a moment, I think I must be witnessing the resurrection of Ananias.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member must not assume that tone. The hon. member is as well aware as any member of this House of the proper methods of debate. He must be well aware that he cannot make accusations of that description.

MR. BUTCHER: I withdraw.

MR. MORAN: It is rough on Ananias, anyhow.

MR. BUTCHER: I will leave that. As regards my own position during the last Parliament I opposed during the whole of that time the James Government. I did so persistently and consistently from the very commencement. During the last elections I stood on the platform as an uncompromising opponent of that Government. I had many reasons for doing so, and if I had the same time to pass over again I would do precisely the same thing. The principal of my reasons was in regard to its policy. Here we have now the same old clock with a different face probably, but still the same old party, the same old policy probably, if they have any. They have not made us aware that they have a policy at all. During the last Parliament I

voted against that Government with the object of putting it out. I was perfectly well aware of what I was doing. I knew fully what the consequences were going to be. I knew that the party that was opposing the James Government then would naturally be called upon to form a Ministry. If we—I am speaking of the four Independents—had not been aware of what would take place, it would have been a different thing, but we knew what would take place when we adopted that course. We were quite aware of the fact that it meant the creation of a Labour Government; and it would have been inconsistent of us and illogical if we had taken the course which my friend here the member for Beverley (Mr. Harper) has done, if we had voted against the Government to put them out and then gone straight across the floor of the House to oppose the new Government. I say that is an illogical position to take up. The hon. member can please himself as to what he does. He is quite at liberty to do as he likes, and I am going to do as I like, and I am glad to say all the Independents are going to do the same thing.

MR. MORAN: Do not give away the great secret.

MR. BUTCHER: This is the position. We are asked by the Opposition to support them. What are we to support? They ask us to support the very party who originally deserted us. We are the remnant of the old original party who sat together. Members now in Opposition deserted us, and formed another party sitting in Opposition to us all the time; and now, when we are masters of the situation, they ask us to cross the floor of the House and do what they did.

MR. RASON: I think the best part of the remnant is on this (Opposition) side.

MR. BUTCHER: I sincerely hope it will stay there. Since the time we Independents created the Ministry who now adorn the Treasury bench, we gave them a fair and generous support; and I deny emphatically that we at any time as a party interfered with the administration or the policy of the Government. I deny emphatically that we ever hampered them in any way. On the contrary, we did everything possible to assist them; and up to the present moment I cannot see that we have any

reason to change our policy. That is my feeling in this matter. I say, any party coming into power is entitled to claim a fair trial and fair treatment. Members now in Opposition, when they went into power, being in a minority, demanded a fair trial and an opportunity of proving themselves. I am only giving to the Government the same assistance that the Opposition claimed for themselves when in power. I say they got a fair trial. For the whole life of a Parliament they were in office; and I say it is only fair to give the present Government the same opportunity of proving their qualities. In fact, they should have a better opportunity; because there are members on the Opposition side who have had a long parliamentary experience not possessed by any of the present Ministers. I do not say that the present Ministers have as a whole shown any marked administrative ability. I cannot say that their handling of the finances has been absolutely satisfactory. But the circumstances are exceptional. Ministers have not had the overflowing treasury which their predecessors enjoyed. Hence the position of Ministers has been very difficult, in view of the large demands for money which were made in all quarters. The position being very much more difficult than that of their predecessors is all the more reason why they should have a fair trial. It is my intention to do for them what I did for their predecessors, and what I think is only my duty—to sit beside the Government, to assist them a little farther, and if they subsequently prove incapable of managing the affairs of the State, I shall also consider it my duty to cast my vote against them.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. P. J. Lynch):** At this very late stage of the debate it is impossible to deal with a subject that has been so well and widely canvassed, without traversing some of the ground already trodden by preceding speakers. But before dealing with some of the items that have not been so fully explained as is desirable, I should like to return my thanks to those members of the Assembly who have congratulated me on my assumption of office; and while feeling most grateful for their congratulations, I can but assure them that dur-

ing the balance of my term, whether it be from this hour until 10 o'clock to-night, or till some time next year or the year following, I hope I shall be equal to their expectations, and to the expectations of many friends who have made very favourable prophecies concerning me. Notwithstanding the somewhat harsh tone of certain speeches in this debate, notwithstanding the regrettable personalities introduced, notwithstanding the fierce fire of personal altercation which has been the aftermath of those personalities, it is rather encouraging to note the generous sentiments expressed by the members for Katanning (Hon. F. H. Piesse) and Toodyay (Mr. Quinlan); and also, I believe, the unexpressed intention of the member for Kimberley (Mr. Connor) to withdraw whatever sting may have lurked in his remarks. I may say that the member for Katanning has been on the offensive as well as the defensive; and he has proved to my satisfaction that in both roles he can acquit himself as a man. And when we survey the whole course of this discussion, involving as it did the manifestation of many traits of human character, it is, so to speak, equivalent to a gleam of sunshine to find that such generosity can be manifested, notwithstanding the small, the mean, and the sometimes unworthy developments which we must deplore. Notwithstanding what has been published in the Press in this country, and said by members in the heat of passion, there have yet been manifested many noble sentiments, as well as temporary expressions of small and mean traits of character. That is a source of pleasure to me; and I hope this Chamber will continue to uphold the dignity that has been its special feature since its inauguration. We come to the case stated by the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Rason); and although the ground has been traversed again and again by others, and the items discussed have been worn threadbare, I feel that even now I am warranted in supplementing what has been said by the advocates of the party to which I have the honour to belong. It would seem that the leader of the Opposition based his attack mainly on a criticism of the financial policy of the Government. He went farther, and made what I consider a regrettable effort to excite disaffection among members of this party.



He objected to fresh taxation, and made passing reference to caucus, and to the administration of the party. This appears to me to be his main ground for asking hon. members to dislodge the Government and place him in power. But notwithstanding the keen scrutiny that the hon. member directed at the present Administration, notwithstanding his long experience and business acumen, which assisted him in turning his searchlight on our actions, it is a certain source of satisfaction to me to know that he has failed, in my judgment, to reveal one weak spot in the administration of the State finances. We have been raked fore-and-aft by this old parliamentary hand. [MR. RASON: And broadside also.] We have been attacked on both sides, and at stem and stern also; and it is rather gratifying that after a trial run of ten months, the Government, on being subjected to the keen scrutiny of the hon. member, came out in my judgment unscathed. And not only in my judgment. I think I am right in saying that we have the unqualified approval of the member for Katauning (Hon. F. H. Piesse) as regards financial administration. If I understood him aright, he said that the Administration had turned over every shilling before spending it; and if that is not an unchallengeable evidence of Ministers' keen application and close attention to duty, I fail to see what could be a higher compliment. I take it as a compliment, being as it is the independent, spontaneous judgment of a member of the Opposition, notwithstanding what has been said by that member's leader. Of course, we naturally expect blame and censure in party warfare. That is inevitable, whether our actions be those of men or of archangels. But, as Byron has well said:—

A man must serve his time to every trade  
Save censure—critics all are ready made.

And it is only natural to expect that members opposite will plume themselves with the conceit that they are right in blaming us. They have done so; and I hope to deal with the censure levelled, and to follow closely the methods employed by the leader of the Opposition in levelling that censure. I do not pretend that what I have to say will not give displeasure to any member opposite. I rather say that I am indifferent whether

my remarks offend or please, whether they soothe or sting. I rather say that it is my object to give a plain, unvarnished, spontaneous expression of my opinion of what has happened under this Administration, and to leave the effects of my statement to take their own course. I am somewhat sick of the show and sick of the seeming of men who say that they do not wish to offend, and who are at the same time drawing their darts from a poisoned source. I care not, so long as what I say is dictated by conviction, what may be the result of my expression of opinion on the acts of the Government during their ten months in office. I shall leave out the caucus from the discussion, because caucus is a rather moth-eaten subject; but taking the administration of the Government and the policy placed before the public, we must needs rely on these as the main grounds on which the occupants of this bench (Treasury) are sought to be censured. Having the testimony of the member for Katauning on the financial administration of this Ministry, and on the other hand the chorus of "hear, hears" from the members of the Opposition when each plank of the Labour platform was read out from this side, we necessarily come to the conclusion that, while they support a policy on these terms and while our administration is vindicated from that quarter, we are obliged to search in another direction for the motive prompting the motion of no-confidence; and I am forced, perhaps slightly against my will, to come to the conclusion that ambition after all has something to do with it, and that while they say they are at one with the policy and administration, they are slaves to aspiring ambition. While I do not want it to be said that I am one who does not esteem a reasonable and praiseworthy amount of ambition in every man, yet it is well to bear in mind that ambition may be carried to dangerous lengths. I will just read what has been said by one who has been closely associated with one of the grandest institutions, perhaps, on the face of this planet. I refer to the British House of Commons and to Edmund Burke, who said:—

The true cause of his drawing so shocking a picture is no more than this, and it ought rather to claim our pity than excite our indignation. He finds himself out of power,

and this condition is intolerable to him. The same sun that gilds all nature and exhilarates the whole creation does not shine upon his disappointed ambition. It is something that rays out of darkness and inspires nothing but gloom and melancholy. Men in this deplorable state of mind find a comfort in spreading the contagion of their spleen. They find an advantage, too; for it is a general popular error to imagine the loudest complainers for the public to be the most anxious and serious for its welfare. If such person can answer the ends of relief and profit to themselves, they are apt to be careless enough about either the means or the consequences.

That is the opinion on record of Edmund Burke. It would seem as if in his time he was metaphorically glancing down the years and noticing things in this Chamber, and that it induced him to give expression to those beautiful words. I do not say it is blameworthy to have ambition; but while it is held that a policy and a Government's administration are right, it is blameworthy to dislodge men when they cannot be supplanted for that reason or for any special purpose except ambition. That is my reason for drawing attention to the dangers and unjustifiable lengths ambition, which is an estimable quality in human beings, may bring them.

MR. HARDWICK: I hope you will bear that in mind.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I can tell the hon. member I have always borne it in mind. If anything has been my failing it is my excessive modesty. If a man told me 18 months ago that I should be in this Chamber and a Minister of the Crown by now, I would have told him to get somewhere else where he would have a better chance of obtaining his livelihood as a prophet. I came here, not because I sought the position. I am here simply because I am pushed here; and I am prepared to answer any challenge on the subject? The member for Guildford referred, in passing, to the need of every member of this House to throw off the shackles of party Government and to vote as independent units, and he said:—

I want every man, irrespective of party and political opinions, to hold the scales in his hand and put what is good on one side and what is bad on the other side, and to judge the Administration accordingly.

That is all very well in its way; but I submit that at this stage of development of responsible government it is impossible. However much we may wish to

dispense with party government, so long as there are three men, or six men, or any multiple of six men, combined and anxious to accomplish a certain end by concerted action, party government will step in every time. For my part I should like to bury party government; I should like to see this Chamber composed of 50 parties on its present basis; but we must take the situation as we find it, and must look abroad among men and recognise that if to attain a certain end it appear to those who are desirous for the attainment of that end that the best means of attaining it is by concerted action, such action must of necessity be counteracted or circumvented by equivalent tactics; and I fail to understand how it is possible to dispense with the system of party government. I have listened with much pleasure to the member for Beverley. [MR. A. J. WILSON: Displeasure?] No; I can listen with pleasure to his remarks; and I am only sorry he did not give a more lengthy deliverance. But for the interjections, I should have followed the hon. member's remarks with greater pleasure. Even the member for Beverley, if he had twenty-five men of the same opinion in the same Chamber to accomplish his particular design would find it necessary to combine with them. He stands apart, it is true; but if he had sufficient minds in this Chamber of an exact and precise quality as his, he would find it necessary to coalesce or combine with the others in order to attain his end. So, while we find such a desire on the part of men under responsible government, I say I am afraid that party government will continue. However, there it is, and we cannot get rid of it; and in my humble judgment, it is impossible at the present state of progress to get rid of what are certainly nefarious aspects. The member for Guildford used this argument, it is true, for the purpose of encouraging some of these men to shed the trammels that party ties imposed. He did it no doubt for an ostensible and noble reason; but in doing it he would find it utterly impossible to carry on if he did not have a solid party behind him. The Opposition are bound by party ties to support him, while there are men on that side of the Chamber who do not believe in his policy and who, if prepared to express their conscientious opin-

ions, would say : " Mr. Rason's views are not ours ; but we are joining in unison with him to defeat the aims and objects of the occupants of the Government benches." That is my opinion. So while appealing to men to vote independently, he could not at the same time depend on his own supporters. Concerning the members on the Opposition side of the House, I do not want to differentiate ; but some are advanced and progressive, while others are as violently reactionary as one could choose to imagine. It is only because they are now united in the action of the leader of the Opposition to dislodge this Ministry that they are bound to party ties. So, in speaking of the spontaneity of the independence of members, the leader of the Opposition could not attain any reasonable success if his own followers observed his own dictum. The leader of the Opposition mentioned in passing that the leader of the Government of the day had not the confidence of his followers. This was a part of his speech that I found I must also dissent from. The hon. member appealed to what I may call the regrettable or deplorable differences that existed in this party. They may be traceable to reasons that are justifiable ; but from his standpoint as leader of the Opposition, he appealed to the prejudices of members of this party, and wanted, so to speak, to widen the breach—that of course is not visible yet, but I may call it the seeming breach—in a party elected on such a solid basis ; and on that ground I have to record my want of admiration for that particular aspect of the hon. member's attack. It has been mentioned that caucus is so strongly destructive to individuality and that it is only because of the persecution inflicted by the caucus whip that we can depend on a solid following of 22. The position was quite clear to these 22 men when they offered their services to the country. They were elected on the clear and distinct understanding that they would be obliged to follow the expressed will of a majority of caucus assembled ; and where is any marked difference between that line of conduct on the part of the Labour party, and that on the part of the Opposition or even the Independents ? I would like to be told of it. I would like to be told by the leader

of the Opposition that majority rule does not exist in his party. I would like to be told that also by the leader of the Independents, who, by the way, has not declared himself yet. They are apparently sailing under sealed orders.

MR. MORAN : Our leader has spoken to-day. We have a fresh leader every day.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS : You work shifts. The fault found with caucus can with equal force be found with any other party in this Chamber. Parties must be guided by majority rule ; and the time has not yet come when minority rule will be recognised. Whom do these gentlemen on the Treasury bench represent ? The 22 Labour men in this Chamber were elected on a clear and distinct platform, one that could not permit or brook of any misunderstanding on the part of the electors ; and the gentlemen on the Treasury bench however ill or well they may discharge their duties, are the elect of those 22, and their leader is one who in the past has given evidence of his claim to the rightful recognition of those 22 men, as in a majority expressed. So when it is said that by caucus rule individuality is suppressed, if I may quote a solid contradiction of that dictum I point to the presence of the present leader of the Government, who has just come in to hear some encomiums passed upon him : he is a modest man, therefore I shall refrain. The Premier is there, and is told to stop there by an overwhelming majority of the party, and it is on account of his undoubted qualities he is there, and by reason of no other fact. Whom have we got in Opposition ? We have so many gentlemen there holding varying shades of opinion. There is hardly a united motive amongst them, except the motive to dislodge the Government party. Take the leader of the Opposition, who has an advanced and progressive programme. Then you move farther on to the member for Sussex, who in the past has shown, I will not call it a reactionary, but a very reactionary spirit. There is every shade of politician, from the progressive down to the inactive reactionary. We get down to the municipal politician, the member for East Perth, who owes his seat to an appeal to the electors on his keen and cute sense of how

drains should be constructed. Then we pass down and get to the wild revolutionary from York. They are a heterogeneous aggregation of irreconcilables, bound together only by the common determination to dislodge the Government. Before passing I want to pay a tribute to other men amongst the party who are equally progressive with the leader of the Opposition. From the Opposition I draw this conclusion: they are bound together in caucus and stimulated to-day in a desire to dislodge the party on the Government side, and I may add in an endeavour to stem the growing tide of popularity. Whereas in the one instance you have on the Government side men elected on a clear and distinct understanding; on the opposite you have men elected on many indistinct ideas and different understandings who are united to do one thing, to dislodge the party on the Government benches. We have to refer in passing—perhaps it is not out of place—to the origin of the Labour party, and why it came into existence. Why was it brought into politics, and where will it ultimately land the country if finally and perhaps in the immediate future its policy becomes the popular policy of the people of the country? In the first instance the party was brought into existence because of the need for remedying some long-standing economic wrongs. It was brought into existence because men were in the habit of seeing the rival factions returned to Parliament and these were doing no good. When they got into Parliament, after having exploded the faith of the men who sent them there, members returned to the electors with the same story, and the thinking citizens folded their arms and came to the conclusion that after all it was folly to place their faith in these contending parties in the political arena. They said, "It is time we had our own party who will represent those who work and strive, and those who after all are the most entitled to consideration at the hands of the Legislature of the country." The Labour party sprang into existence in a small way, and had not the support at the outset of the wide circle of friends that stand at its back to-day. It started in a small way, and marched majestically forward. It started with mustard-seed

like proportions; now it is like a giant oak in the country's politics. The Labour party did not come into existence for the sake of fun, to minister to the desires of men, or to stem the material progress of the country, to cripple its material fortunes and advancement. It came into existence to remedy the economic wrongs that thoughtful citizens who folded their arms discerned. It has progressed on lines that have exceeded the expectations of those who were most sanguine. It cannot be said that it has progressed because of any detriment it has caused. It rather progressed because thinking men and women recognised a policy that would secure the advancement of the individual as well as the advancement of the State as a whole. I wish to say at this stage that it is quite immaterial whether the instrument in the hands of the people be the Labour party or the Liberal party. It is all the same; the end to be attained is all the same. The reason why at this moment perhaps the Labour party in New Zealand is not so buoyant and not so successful as it has become in other places is that it has a man at the head who recognises the trend of feeling in the colony, and that is the reason why the Labour party there is not so buoyant as the Labour party in the leading States of Australia. Men should dismiss from their minds that the Labour party are the instrument to carry on the legislation, because in New Zealand the instrument is not the Labour party. The popular will is expressed in another way in the return of a party headed by Mr. Seddon, who faithfully discharges the duty placed in his hands. I cite New Zealand to show it does not matter what the instrument is. If there had been a Seddon in this country, it is almost certain there would not be such a solid majority in the Labour party here; there would not be the same need for its existence. The presence here of the Labour party is a solid answer to the allegation that it is not the desire of the people that a certain policy that has been agreed to by the major portion of the people of the country be carried out. It has been said by some amongst our own party that the Labour party has lost some of its frigidity; that it is not so stern or exacting as it was in years gone by. I believe what the member for

Beverley read this afternoon is a fair and reasonable exposition of the situation. At this time it is necessary to revise our methods in keeping with the exigencies of the times. I may say that, following this example, the Labour party keeps as closely as possible to what is recognised on all sides as the immutable laws of nature itself. We look around the world of creation and we see the oak that dwells in the forest. It can swing and shiver and lose all its semblance, and yet when the storm is passed it remains the same oak notwithstanding the storm that swayed and twirled it hither and thither, and it goes on to serve life's purposes. If the Labour party have not adhered rigidly to the platform laid out in the past, it is because with wider experience we recognise it is necessary to revise our plans, as I said before and I say again, and I shall say as long as I am in the arena of politics, in order to be in keeping with the exigencies of the times. Fault has been found with this; but I need only point to the party in the different States. Why in one State has the party adopted protection? In one State it opposed federation—why? In another State it went bald-headed for that—why? In one State it agreed unanimously to exemptions on certain areas under a taxation proposal—why? In this State it will not agree to exemptions at all—why? This goes to show that after all the Labour party's methods are not ideal. The party has to change them in order to suit the needs of the time. The strong charge that was brought against the Administration was the financial administration, or maladministration as it has been called, of the Treasury. So far as I can tot it up, the charge covered 10 pages of *Hansard* out of a total of 22 pages. Therefore it seems that the leader of the Opposition made the financial maladministration the sheet-anchor of his attack, if it may be called so. He made the financial maladministration his strong point. After considering the qualities and attainments of the man who led the charge, after knowing that for a long time he was in a position to judge what is ill or well in financial arrangements of the country, it is only natural to expect his findings would be as far as possible the findings of an expert. You can pry into every

nook and corner of the Treasury, and take exception to the method of book-keeping of the man who expressed himself in strong language in its praise. The member referred to over-borrowing. I do not know that it is desirable on my part to refer to this subject, in view of the very ample explanation the leader of the Government has given to the House and the country. At the same time I hold a position as a member of the Ministry, and in obedience to a desire to make as full and ample an acquaintance as to how the over-borrowing took place, I did at a very early period after the charge was laid, and after it had been answered, take the opportunity of inquiring for myself how the over-borrowing took place. My authority is the Under Treasurer. [Interjection by the PREMIER.] I am sorry I cannot quote that public officer, because I have unchallengeable proofs from him. I say, notwithstanding my allegiance to my leader, I thought it my duty to inquire for myself how the over-borrowing took place, and see if there was any maladministration or any act that had not the authority of Parliament behind it. I was going to quote and give somewhat fuller reasons, but am instructed it is a wise policy to act otherwise, and I am prepared to follow that advice. We pass on to another very important point, and that is the assertion that the presence and power in this country of the Labour party has been inimical to its progress; that it has been, so far as borrowing is concerned, an unhappy circumstance that we have not been able to restore or maintain that credit to which the State in its present position is naturally entitled. I will take that statement, and I will ask members to reflect upon this fact, that if there is any unfailing barometer of the opinion in which this State is held, it must necessarily be the value of the stocks on the London market. I have taken some trouble to inquire into this. On the 10th August the present Labour Government came into power, and Mr. Rason, under whose régime this country should stand high in the opinion of financial experts, went out of office. No later than in the course of this debate the hon. member said, "even with the present Government;" casting the reflection plainly that it is now hard

to make terms on the London market. I find, however, that on the 10th August the price of the 3½ per cents. on the Stock Exchange was from £95 to £97, whereas on June 1st of this year, after ten months' sample of the Labour Government, the same stock was quoted at from £98 to £99. Other stocks were in proportion. If this is not an unflinching barometer of the total indifference of the financier to any Government in power, then I fail to recognise what is a true and reliable gauge. This justifies us in asserting that we have an ample grievance against members of the Opposition and the Press of this country because they urged that on account of our having a Labour Government in power we cannot get on and progress. And is it any wonder in some respects that we cannot progress while we have these croakers going along circulating such unfounded and malicious lies? The charge made crumbles into dust, as far as the opinion of the financier at a distance is concerned; and it only gives us solid ground for deciding that we are not getting just treatment from those men who have persistently and consistently circulated those boogies.

**MR. BURGESS:** Who has done it? I do not run the country down. I have great faith in it.

**THE PREMIER:** You run the Government down.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** It is passing strange that things have not been worse, considering the lack of help from those men who should have been closely interested in the advancement and welfare of the country. It is strange to read in the Press the clearly expressed opinion that the fact of our being in power is sounding the death-knell of this country so far as its prosperity is concerned. I have to enter my protest against the actions of men who, instead of giving us a reasonable trial as far as raising finance is concerned, are found to be enemies of the country as to croaking. I think I am fully justified in my remarks. I say that those men who do such things are not the friends of this country. If we view the position, if we survey the result of their action, we will find that they have not been helping those in power, and have not given a fair,

reasonable, and rational trial to the policy of the Labour Government. The leader of the Opposition has stated that he will need to be very firmly convinced before he will agree to any farther taxation. I think it is plainly evident that this country could do with a little taxation, especially from those who could more easily stand it. In bygone times, long before there was an income tax, when the King wanted to raise armies, it was the men who could afford it who found money to assist. Now, such a person grumbles and grumbles, and wishes to throw the impost on the other fellow. I will give an illustration of the nature of taxation by way of land and income tax. But before proceeding to that, I would say I have to regret that the leader of the Opposition and many members of that side have thought fit to recant so much from previous professions. The member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins), who previously declared himself in favour of that kind of taxation, now comes forward and declares that this country is not in need of taxation, and that he would need to be convinced that it was wanted before he would countenance such impost. I will give a slight example of the unfairness and unwisdom of those members opposite in not agreeing to this form of taxation. It has come to my certain knowledge that a block of land in this country was purchased by a certain party for £5,000. It was disposed of about five years afterwards for £12,000. In the meantime that block of land, as an investment, entirely escaped any form of taxation as far as the upkeep of the State is concerned. Whilst this was happening we have had mining propositions in this country, many of which were bought at much less than £12,000, and this property was contributing infinitely more towards the revenue of the State than that block of land valued at £12,000. Where does the equality come in? If we have one property sealed and protected because it is land, and we get another taxed simply because it is a mine and employing perhaps dozens of men, and contributing to our mining revenue and towards our railway receipts, where does the equality come in?

**MR. BURGESS:** Does not the land pay taxation.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** I am giving a concrete example, a man who employs capital in land being exempt from taxation of that land, whilst a man who utilises capital in mining pays taxation directly and indirectly. Take the timber industry or any other industry which exists. I fail to understand why the owners of such block of land should be a special subject of solicitude on the part of members opposite, whilst other people have to bear taxation which is crushing them.

**MR. BURGESS:** Will the hon. member explain the difference, how these mining men are taxed, because I cannot understand it?

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** In the first place the mining man is taxed on dividends, and in the second he pays £1 per acre. Again, he is taxed as an employer of labour, he is taxed as a contributor towards the railway revenue, and farther he is taxed by stamp duties and other transactions. We have five heads under this particular form of investment by which a man is taxed, as against the owner of land.

**MR. DIAMOND:** Railway revenue is not taxation.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** We want to know, especially in view of the desire to be equitable on the part of hon. members opposite, why they allow a land-owner to escape and persist in taxing the mine-owner.

**HON. F. H. PIESSE:** I would like to know whether that £12,000 you speak of is in connection with improved land or unimproved land?

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** It is a city block.

**HON. F. H. PIESSE:** That is, unimproved?

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** It is unimproved.

**HON. F. H. PIESSE:** I am with you in that.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** That is a block of land regarding which one tries to escape taxation. We are bound to respect what is said by the leader of the Opposition in this regard. He does not make a public statement without a keen sense of the responsibility attaching to such statement. When we get the leader of the Opposition at a function in this country saying with

regard to taxation proposals that what we require is legislative rest, we must pay attention to him on account of his position. Notwithstanding the liberal tendencies of the member for Katanning (Hon. F. H. Piesse), we must pay attention to the leader of the Opposition in preference to that member's opinion and the opinion of the member for York. I am referring to the inequality of taxation which calls upon the mine-owner to contribute to the revenue, whilst the owner of a block of land valued at £12,000 is suffered to escape. We will take another form of taxation. I have a friend in one of the inland areas of this country—he is a worker in the mines, and has to support a rather large family—who figured out with me one Sunday afternoon what taxation cost him in relation to condensed milk. He found that it cost him no less than 25s. per annum. There are other forms of milk production. There, in relation to one very necessary article of diet, we have a man contributing 25s. towards the revenue; and we have other people here on the land in the agricultural areas who can provide themselves with this very necessary commodity. Where does the equality come in? That man to whom I referred pays the amount stated, and one does not know how much he has to contribute in regard to a whole number of articles of diet. I am giving this as an unchallengeable fact as to what this man has to contribute towards the country. [MR. BURGESS: Does the other man contribute nothing?] The man who has cows contributes nothing so far as milk is concerned. I want to show that working people are taxed to the extent I have mentioned. If the hon. member chooses to inquire, he can very easily figure out himself what is necessary to support a man under such circumstances; so that, coming to the necessity for developing the resources of the country, it is fair and reasonable that a tax should be placed on those who can most easily bear it. I have travelled over the vacant mineral areas in this State, and have seen on every side the need for public batteries, which should be provided even if they cost £50,000 a year. Yet because of unwillingness to impose just taxation, those batteries cannot be started. Is it not necessary to provide facilities for the

employment of a large and thriving population in the interior? And why should those people on the arable lands and in the metropolitan portion of this State refuse to contribute? Why the public and responsible men of this country should refuse to let them contribute passes my imagination. Even in the interests of progress, I cannot understand why they withhold their consent to the imposition of so just a tax, which will enable the industries of this country to be developed on the lines the Government would follow if it had the funds at its disposal. The Arbitration Act was mentioned in the debate; but that subject has been worn almost threadbare. The statement was made that the sum voted for works was not spent by this Government, and that the works expenditure did not equal that of the previous Government. I have here a statement recently compiled by the departmental officers, and I find that the present Government have spent not only the amount voted last session, but some £10,000 or £11,000 in addition; and not only was there a saving in the administration of that department as compared with the previous year, but June shows a reduction of £7,000 on the year. The preceding Government was authorised by Parliament to expend out of revenue on works £350,000; the actual expenditure was £488,000, the percentage of expenditure to estimate being 84·31. The present Government was authorised to spend during the year just closed £357,000. The actual expenditure was £309,000, against which there are liabilities of £58,000. The percentage of expenditure to amount voted was 86 per cent.—an increase of 4 per cent. on the percentage of last year. But the liabilities—the cash representing the work now in progress—are not only equal to the amount actually voted, but exceed that amount by £11,000. Therefore, when the leader of the Opposition charges us with not living up to our profession in the matter of spending money, he either makes a statement in haste, or makes it in entire ignorance of the subject. I come to the Perth Sewerage Scheme, in connection with which it was sought to throw some blame on the Government for alleged dilly-dallying. I can but say that the plans are completed, and the

department have gone as far as they can legally go to push the scheme to completion. But with the action of the present Ministry in advancing this necessary work I will contrast the action of the last Government, of which the leader of the Opposition was a member, to show the tactics he and his colleagues resorted to. The following communication was on the 21st May, 1904, addressed by the Under Secretary for Works to the engineer:—

The Minister wishes me to add that it is the intention of the Government to place an engineer specially engaged for a term in charge of the sewerage works, and that this engineer should arrive in Perth in time to settle the final plans and the contracts before they are called; and he wishes to know about when this engineer should arrive in Perth, provided the additional staff mentioned hereunder can be obtained shortly. I may add that it is intended to write to the New South Wales Government on the subject of a suitable engineer.

That showed the burning anxiety of the then Minister for Works to bring this very necessary work toward completion. That, however, was just before the election. The same Minister, after the election, instructs his Under Secretary to write to Sydney as follows:—

Yours of 7th. Please send four draftsmen you have engaged. We would prefer to defer, but evidently from your telegram it would not be fair to men, and my original wire fully authorised your engaging and sending them round without further reference. Many thanks for trouble taken.

Is it not somewhat ungraceful for the leader of the Opposition to infer, by innuendo or otherwise, that there has been anything lacking in the action of this Government, when the actions of his colleague speak in such trumpet tones their inaction? [MEMBER: Did not the circumstances warrant the action?] No doubt; after the election. Now we come to another much-debated item in this discussion—the rabbit-proof fence. That work was undertaken a long time ago, I believe by the James Government. They began No. 1 fence, the fence that was supposed to arrest the march of the rodents into the valuable agricultural and pastoral areas, on the 9th January, 1902; and it was completed to the junction with No. 2 fence, at Guin Creek, for a total distance of 537 miles, on the 31st January, 1905, at a cost, by contract and day labour, of £70,000, or about £132 per mile. So



much for what was done by the Lands Department under the James Government. Now we come to what has been done by this rascally Labour Government. I should like members to bear in mind that the rate of progress for those two years was only 180 miles per year. What have the Labour crowd done? The No. 2 fence was commenced in April, 1904, certainly a few months before we took office. It was completed in June, 1905. The number of miles erected per month was 52. Eight parties were engaged in doing the work; 900 miles have been erected by day labour during the last 14 months, which makes the average rate of construction 65 miles per month, at a cost of £118 per mile. So this nefarious system of day labour on the rabbit-proof fence has saved the country something like £12,600. And farther, as showing that Ministers are entitled to some recognition for the part we have played, the rate of progress was 65 miles per month, whereas the rate of progress under the Lands Department régime was 118 miles per year. Members can imagine the difference, and can imagine the kind of administration which has been held up to this country as progressive, as opposed to Labour legislation. The facts show incontestably what was done by this Government in ten months, and by the preceding Government in two years. When I came into office, which was thrust on me and accepted none too willingly, my first concern was to find out what could reasonably be regarded as obstacles to the maintaining of speed in constructing that necessary work. I found that one obstacle was the class of country encountered, and another the modes of transit. These were the principal reasons why we could not keep in advance of the rabbit vanguard. My first act was to pass for approval a sum of £7,000 to supplement transit equipment, with the result that we have now on their way to these shores 100 camels to enable that fence to be completed, and to ensure that no rabbits get beyond it. That was my first concern; and I felt so anxious, notwithstanding what was said by the member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins) about the anxiety of this Government to safeguard the interests of squatter millionaires, that I determined to leave no

stone unturned. [MR. DIAMOND: Who are those squatter millionaires?] That is what I should like to know. Irrespective of that consideration, however, it was my desire to push through that fence at all costs. I cared not if a camel was buried at every mile-post, or whether the money was begged, borrowed, or stolen; the fence had to go through in order to save from destruction the arable and pastoral areas in this country. That was my policy; and it was immediately endorsed by Cabinet. There are a few more trifles, but I think I am wearying the House. I should like to show how this fencing contract was carried on in the past, under the régime of a Government that labelled itself "progressive":—

Three hundred miles of fencing erected by the Lands Department has still to be grubbed on both sides, at an average cost of £4 per mile. The average cost of 465 miles erected under contract by the Lands Department and completed by the Works Department amounts to £62,000, or an average cost per mile of £133 [within a pound of my former figure]. Taking the £133 plus the £4 still to be expended, we get £137 as against £118; and the £118 is the cost per mile for a class of country infinitely harder to negotiate than the country through which the other part of the fence runs, the latter country being closer to railway communication and to points of supply.

So after all, in the matter of administration, there is something to be said for the much-maligned Labour Government that now occupies the Treasury bench. I wish also to remark before passing from the subject, that it was nothing short of criminal neglect for the Lands Department to dilly-dally for two years at the rate of 180 miles a year, and thus incur an expenditure of £70,000, which, had the department been interested in the work they were engaged on, could have been saved to the Treasury. That is a statement of what could have been saved had the No. 1 fence been pushed forward as this Government has pushed it forward. These statements will stand the test of scrutiny, as showing what was done by the past Government, showing that their administration compares most unfavourably with that of the present occupants of the Treasury bench.

At 6:30, the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7:30, Chair resumed.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS  
(continuing): I was addressing myself to

the rather easy task of demonstrating what a hard lot this country had in not having a Labour Ministry at the helm at an earlier date. I was showing, in regard to the profession made by the late Minister for Works, as to what would be undertaken respecting public works, that it was carried out to the letter, and not only that, but to the extent of some £10,000 or £11,000 in advance. The leader of the Opposition sought to make capital out of the fact that the Minister for Works did not live up to his profession in the matter of expenditure; and I think I have shown to the satisfaction of the keenest inquirer that we have not only spent the amount approved of by this House, but also a trifle of £10,000 or £11,000 in advance.

MR. RASON: Then the returns must be wrong; I mean the published returns.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have no doubt the hon. member will contradict me; but he is likely to find himself just in the same unfortunate position as he found himself in contradicting the figures of the lieutenant whom he praised. The authorised expenditure for the year ending the 30th June was £357,000. The actual expenditure, according to the records which the hon. member referred to—[MR. RASON: The published returns?]—quite true, that did not bring the actual state of the expenditure up to date, was £309,000, making an underdraft of £47,000, against which the liabilities were £58,000; thus clearly showing that the charge levelled by the leader of the Opposition falls to the ground in the face of the artillery of these figures. I was also striving to show how unfortunate the country had been in not having the Labour Ministry at the helm when the rabbit-proof fence was first undertaken. It is unnecessary to repeat the figures farther than to say that during the two years the Lands Department had charge of the construction of the fence, their rate of progress was 118 miles per year, whereas the rate of progress since the present Administration came into power was 65 miles per month.

MR. RASON: The rate of progress since the Public Works Department took it over?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will give you three months in.

MR. RASON: I will be more generous. I will give you three years.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The present Administration came into office on the 10th August. The work was transferred from the Lands Department in April, three months previously. Since that date to the present the rate of progress has been 65 miles per month, as against 118 miles per annum under the administration of the Lands Department and my friend opposite. [MR. RASON: That is not so.] If the hon. member maintains it is not so, I can only say that I have the utmost faith in the figures of my lieutenants; and if the hon. member is prepared to challenge them I will give him ample opportunity to do so.

MR. RASON: I wish to be perfectly clear. The point I raise is that the hon. member is drawing comparisons between the time the Lands Department administered the rabbit-proof fence and the short period that the Public Works Department administered it during the present and past Administrations. I want him, if he will be, to be fair and to give the comparison of the cost of the Public Works expenditure under the past and present Administrations.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: We are dealing with the annual expenditure. [MR. RASON: Ah!] The hon. member may shake his head with as much disgust as he chooses; but the fact still remains that the work was undertaken by the Public Works Department, a little over three months of which were during the hon. member's administration and the balance under the administration of this Government. The comparison is that the rate of progress was 118 miles per annum under his administration. [MR. RASON: No, no—118 miles under the Lands administration.] I will give you the three months if you choose; but I want to say that the rate of progress was seven times greater during the administration of this Government than it was during his own administration. That is my statement. Now we come to the second and most important point, that it took the Administration of the hon. gentleman opposite two years to build this fence; and had they progressed at the same rate as has been carried on by the present Administration the No. 2 fence need never have been

constructed. In other words, had the Lands Department, under the member for Boulder and his predecessor, that is under the administration of the James Government, been of that active progressive character which they seek to make the citizens of this country believe it was, the State would have been saved £70,000. That is my positive statement.

MR. RASON: It is a most unfair one.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: You cannot say it is untrue.

MR. RASON: The rules of the House prevent me.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Why was No. 2 fence erected?

MR. RASON: Why do you not pay your men?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I will tell you all about that.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: To come to another matter. I do not think it was included in the long list of frivolous charges levelled against the head of this Government; but since it has been thought wise on the part of the Opposition to level many groundless and bogus charges, it is just as well in return to point to some of the virtues of our administration which we have a just right to claim. I refer particularly to the Metropolitan Water Supply. where, under the administration of my friend the member for Kalgoorlie (Hon. W. D. Johnson), the citizens of Perth and the neighbouring suburbs are now entitled to a marked reduction on the water charges of the past. I do not wish to detract from the energy which the former board displayed in administering that department; but I claim that, notwithstanding the charges of administrative inability and incapacity, we were able to show, side by side with the work of the board, a profit of between no less than £5,000 and £6,000, in addition to expending a large sum on capital account. That does not bespeak the inability or incapacity of this Government when we have such a respectable showing as compared with the work of the board in the past. I mention this unchallengeable fact in passing, because I feel we are justified in doing so, to balance some of the bogus charges made by our friends opposite. [MR. H. BROWN: Look at the quality of the water.] Yes; and not only have we been able to curtail the supply from the

objectionable bores, but we have been able to give a supply of far superior quality which the former board was not able to give. [MR. H. BROWN: Boiling water from Leederville.] The Causeway bore has been closed down; and the expense of the Leederville bore has all come out of earnings, in addition to making and securing that advantage which we hope to be in a position to give to the residents of Perth and suburbs.

MR. RASON: Who put down the Leederville bore?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The department.

MR. RASON: Under whose administration.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: You started it; but you cannot call that responsibility for the administration that followed. Let me tell the hon. gentleman opposite that I am dealing solely with the work accomplished during last year. I am comparing the sum total of the result of the work last year with that of previous years. [MR. RASON: I know there are some "bores" you did not put down.] Surely it is a fair average sample of the wisdom of the administration and the close attention paid when, for the first time, we are in a position to reduce the price of water to the Perth citizens which the board in the past was unable to do, while they were at the same time piling up capital account. That is a plain position. Mention was made by the member for Beverley, in company with a few other members in this Chamber, of the party on this side of the House being under the thumb, so to speak, of an irresponsible party outside. [MR. DIAMOND: Hear, hear.] The member for South Fremantle is quite willing to shut his eyes and blindfold himself to the past and to the experience of other countries. He is quite content to forget that in New South Wales there was the Free-trade and Liberal Association, which controlled to a great extent the work of selection and actions of members of Parliament, which fact has led to the success of that party. Also, he forgets that in North Queensland there is a Separation party, under whose rule no one can obtain support unless he is in favour of Separation, and by which he is held responsible for his every individual act in the Queensland Parliament. But what seems to be a veniality

with other political parties amounts to a deadly sin on the part of the Labour party. I deny that this party is in any sense directly under the thumb of any outside organisation. I think it is quite plain that we are as independent here in the discharge of our duties as any member of the Opposition or any member on the Independent bench. It has been said by the member for Beverley (Mr. Harper) that Congress expressed itself in an unjustifiable way in regard to a member of the Arbitration Court. We need not dive far into history to see that people have claimed as their special right, not only in this country but in all British countries, to criticise the actions of Judges. While I say this, I wish to assert that the Trades Congress was not alone in the measure of criticism it was indulging in; and if the member for Beverley chose to magnify the sins of the Labour party, it was equally fair that he should notice another factor in this country. I refer to the impeachment of a former occupant of the president's chair in the Arbitration Court by the Employers' Association of the State. If it is fair to criticise the action of the Trades Congress, it was equally fair to draw attention to the mouth-piece of the Employers' Association. I say it is not right to hold up to obloquy one section of the community, and at the same time to hide and blindfold and put out of view the actions of another factor in the industries of this country. If it is fair to criticise the actions of the Trades Congress, so also it is fair to criticise the methods of the Employers' Association in this country. I simply wish to say that as the hon. member was so keenly alive to watch the movements on the other side, it was also right that he should watch the attitude at least of the spokesman of a section of the employers towards a member of the Court. It is not fair to draw attention to the action of Congress and at the same time to shut one's eyes to a similar action on the part of the other side. I will pass over a whole number of items and come to the point that Labour legislation, when given a reasonable trial, is in the welfare and well-being of any self-governing State that chooses to adopt it. We have often been referred to the State of New Zealand, and it is only fair, while referring

to that State, to take the opinion of a man who can be rightly regarded as a just and uninterested witness of how that policy has worked out in that State. I am going to refer to the opinion of a man who is entirely unpartisan in that State, who viewed, and had a splendid opportunity of viewing, how this policy worked out which we seek to introduce here.

MR. DIAMOND: There is no Labour party in New Zealand.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not wedded to terms. I am going to refer to the policy attempted to be instituted in this country, but against which there is concerted action on the other side to prevent coming into play. It is just as well at this juncture, no matter what our views may be, to strive to hold our opinions while we hear the verdict of a man who had no interest either in the success of one policy as opposed to another. This is the opinion of a Governor of New Zealand, Lord Ranfurly, in a long leading article to an English magazine. After referring to several measures which we seek to have enacted in this country, such as Old Age Pensions, Arbitration Law, State Fire Insurance, Income Tax, Land Tax, and a few more, this is what Lord Ranfurly's presumably unbiased opinion is as to the effect of the operation of those measures. He said in conclusion:—

I know that New Zealand's Premier and the people of the colony mostly seem to consider these islands and talk of them as "God's own country." Certainly they are a pleasant land, inhabited by a pleasant people.

People do not look pleasant unless they are doing fairly well. Lord Ranfurly goes on to say:—

Still a land but partially developed, with mineral resources so far but little touched; and I believe there lies a great future before that colony, and that New Zealand will be able to hold her own among the rising nations of the world.

We are told that in this State a blight will come over the face of nature if these Acts were instituted here.

MR. FOULKES: Some of the Acts are instituted here.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: This is no partisan or willing witness; it is the evidence of one who stood calmly by with folded arms and now tells the result of measures which we seek to have instituted here. After that result, I feel perfectly

justified in giving this as a bulk sample of the evidence of an unbiased witness, at the same time by a witness who is entitled in the highest degree to our respect.

MR. THOMAS: Do not forget that New Zealand is run by a democratic Government, not a Labour Government.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the hon. member had been here to-night he would have heard me explain that if there had been a Seddon in this country there would not be so much need for a Labour party. The Labour party in New Zealand are not so strong because there is no need to be. They are not there as an instrument; Seddon is there as the instrument in the hands of the people. I will give members another example of the necessity for the existence of the kind of legislation which we seek to have instituted here. I will give members the opinion of a man who is well-known throughout the English-speaking countries—Andrew Carnegie. In speaking at a social function in one of the Eastern States of the Union he gave his opinion as follows—and this is the opinion of Andrew Carnegie, who viewed the condition of the State from an eminence that a great many men do not advance to, who is looking from a point of independent vantage, and these are his opinions:—

It is one of the most cheering facts of our day that under present conditions the wages of labour tend to rise, and the price of necessities of life tend to fall. There never was a nation so splendidly situated as ours is at the present moment in regard to labour. Every sober, capable, and willing man finds employment at wages which, with thrift and a good wife to manage, will enable him to go forward toward laying up a competence for old age.

The point I wish to make is this. Taking the opinion of that man, far as he is removed from necessity, we want to see that noble sentiment placed in the mouths of the people here. In this State we do not want Andrew Carnegie; we would rather regard him as the missing dimension. That is the position as far as I sum up. Ultimately we may have people who will express the same sentiments. We want to see Andrew Carnegies here, only on a smaller scale. We want to see the realisation of the sentiment that is there expressed, but we believe the presence of the man as he is known

is not required, and rather hinders the good which he pictures. So far as parties in this House are concerned, as far as the actions that have been set to the credit of this party is concerned, there is not one aspect, not one tittle of accusation that I am obliged or constrained to regret. I feel that in our dealings with the Independent party everything has been fair and above-board. They can maintain that policy of mystic silence which they maintained in the past. They are like the Egyptian Sphinx; they have not declared themselves. The same thing applies to the Opposition. We met them on lines of independence, without the slightest idea of comprising ourselves one way or the other. They did likewise. The negotiations proved abortive, and such proof stands as a testimony that both parties entered into the thing with a sense of preserving their honour. I will not stand idly by and listen to aspersions cast on the party, that we have been denuded of all sense of honour in making reasonable advances for a solution of the difficulty that seemed insoluble.

MR. CONNOR: You stood idly by and did not defend us when you ought to have done.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: In regard to the Independents, I say they are, and have been, the closest allies of this party. They have plainly shown themselves to be so. As members who know me best will admit, I do not say this for the purpose of inducing them to modify their feelings one way or the other. I have already stated that I am in perfect oblivion as to how their votes will be cast. But I feel it is my duty to recognise that the policy, which is as far as I can discern the policy of the Independents more closely converges to the policy of this party than that of any other party of the House. I know that; but at the same time I feel they would not wish us to sacrifice any tittle of our honour or independence in order to seek coalition with them. My time is up. I have only to say in conclusion that whether the Labour party be in power or out of power, they will still march in the course in which they have marched in the past.

MR. THOMAS: The Opposition said it was a reckless gallop.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It depends upon the point of view. But as

far as the reckless gallop of this party is concerned, as far as the mark-time policy is concerned, I say there is no other possible attitude for the Government to take up than was taken up and outlined in that policy speech at Subiaco; no other policy unless the leader of this party leaves himself open to the charge of being utterly ignorant of the situation, and equally indifferent as to where a reckless policy would finally land them. I wish to say that whether we are on the cross benches or in any part of this House, we shall continue to observe that sincerity of purpose which in the past has been no mean characteristic of our party and policy since it has appeared on the horizon of politics.

**MR. FRANK CONNOR** (Kimberley) : I do not propose to deliver a speech, but I want to make an announcement on the situation as it is at the present moment. In my opinion there is only one solution to the political position in this country now, and that is an appeal to the electors, a dissolution of this House, so that the people may decide who is in the right and who is in the wrong; and when that policy is brought before the country it should be put before them on lines of a liberal and democratic nature. And I hope that the party which goes to the country on those lines, whichever party it is, will win.

**MR. E. P. HENSHAW** (in explanation) : I rise to make a short explanation. During the past week there have been many hard things said by members in this debate, and I admit that I have transgressed. I have attributed to the leader of our party a want of sincerity, and although a most severe rebuke was necessary for the inclusion in the policy of the Government of the Pilbarra Railway proposal, or rather its method of construction, I feel compelled in justice to our leader to state, with the knowledge I now possess, that I was not justified in making a personal matter of this, and in placing the full responsibility on any one person. I deeply regret that I did so. I have no desire at this juncture to assail others in connection with the matter; but I cannot allow the burden to be thrown upon any one individual; hence this explanation.

Amendment (Mr. Rason's) put, and a division taken.

**MR. THOMAS** : It has not been laid down this session, and I would like to ask your ruling, whether pairs are recorded now in our proceedings.

**THE SPEAKER** : No; they are not recorded.

**MR. THOMAS** : I ask, as the member for Coolgardie (Dr. Ellis) and the member for Greenough (Mr. Nanson) have paired.

Division resulted as follows :—

Ayes	...	...	...	22
Noes	...	...	...	25

Majority against ... 3

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Brown	Mr. Angwin
Mr. Burges	Mr. Bath
Mr. Carson	Mr. Bolton
Mr. Cowcher	Mr. Butcher
Mr. Diamond	Mr. Connor
Mr. Foulkes	Mr. English
Mr. Gregory	Mr. Hastie
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. Heilmann
Mr. Harper	Mr. Henshaw
Mr. Hayward	Mr. Holman
Mr. Hicks	Mr. Moran
Mr. Hopkins	Mr. Johnson
Mr. Isdell	Mr. Keyser
Mr. Layman	Mr. Lynch
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Moran
Mr. N. J. Moore	Mr. Needham
Mr. S. F. Moore	Mr. Nelson
Mr. Piesse	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Quinlan	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Rason	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Frank Wilson	Mr. Troy
Mr. Gordon (Teller).	Mr. Watts
	Mr. A. J. Wilson
	Mr. F. F. Wilson
	Mr. Gill (Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

Question—that the Address-in-Reply be adopted—put.

**THE PREMIER** : Before this division is taken, I desire to make a personal explanation. Last night I withdrew certain remarks made in the course of my speech so far as they related to the member for Mount Margaret (Mr. Taylor). It has been pointed out to me, and it appears to me correctly pointed out, that under the circumstances of that withdrawal, the public might think that the same remarks applied to the member for Murchison (Mr. Holman). I wish to say I had no intention to apply any such remarks to the hon. member, and I should be indeed sorry if the withdrawal made last night appeared to convey those remarks from one hon. member to the other. I wish to make this explanation in fairness to the member for Murchison.

Question passed; the Address adopted.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at twelve minutes past 8 o'clock, until the next Tuesday.